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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2421
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0977
RUEHWN/AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN 1486
RUEHKG/AMEMBASSY KINGSTON 1966
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 2433
RUEHBH/AMEMBASSY NASSAU 2664
RUEHSP/AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN 1619
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0827
RUEHDG/AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO 0363
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0265
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 0414
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0850

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 000348

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STATE FOR WHA/CAR
DRL
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
TREASURY FOR JEFFREY LEVINE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/20/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PKAO](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: CEP PRESSURED TO ANOINT PREVAL UNTIL HIS DECLARATION AS WINNER

Classified By: CDA Timothy Carney, Reasons 1.4 b and d.

¶1. (C) Summary: Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) General Director Jacques Bernard and members of the CEP report that they came under extreme pressure from the executive to "throw the election" to Rene Preval as vote counting for the Haitian presidential race came to a close February 12 and 13. After Preval's supporters began their largely peaceful protests February 13, the IGOH, CEP and Preval agreed to form a committee to examine the results. CEP member Pierre Richard Duchemin called the committee cover for a political decision.

The IGOH disbanded the committee February 15 and in conjunction with the CEP and members of the international community decided to redistribute blank votes among all the presidential candidates, thereby giving Preval the win. End Summary.

¶2. (C) As the vote count for Haiti's presidential race neared completion February 12 and 13, it became increasingly clear that due to the large number of blank and spoiled ballots presidential hopeful Rene Preval would receive less than 50 percent of the vote. According to Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) Director General Jacques Bernard, as Preval supporters began to cry foul and threaten demonstrations, the Minister of the Interior and the President's office intensely pressured Bernard to declare Preval the winner by giving him 53 percent of the vote. Bernard resisted, saying that his job was to ensure that recorded votes were the only thing that contributed to the result of the election.

¶3. (C) Preval's supporters began to protest February 13 and Preval himself proclaimed that there had been massive electoral manipulation. Preval said he and his supporters would contest any result that did not give him more than 50 percent of the vote. The Interim Government of Haiti (IGOH) proposed creating a commission composed of the IGOH, CEP, and L'Espwa party representatives to study the results. The commission was set to include both the Minister of the

Interior and the President's Chief of Staff, two chief sources of early pressure on Jacques Bernard. CEP member Pierre Richard Duchemin called the commission a "rubber stamp" February 14 and said it would produce a political, not a technical, solution to problems with the election.

¶4. (C) The IGOH abandoned the commission idea February 15; later that evening, under intense pressure from the IGOH, the CEP decided to redistribute blank ballots among the presidential candidates giving Preval the win. Some CEP members came under intense pressure from the executive as well as the Chilean and Brazilian ambassadors to find a way to give Preval a first round victory. CEP member Josephine Gauthier said the government locked the CEP in a room in the Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Juvenat, kept the members from sleeping, and threatened the CEP with responsibility for any bloodshed or violence that might result from a second round. As a show of his displeasure, CEP member Francois Benoit abstained from the vote, but all other eight members voted to redistribute the blank ballots. Duchemin said February 17 that the decision avoided jeopardizing the credibility of the vote and that the populace would not have accepted contestations followed by at least some recounting of the results.

¶5. (C) Comment: Under the February 2005 electoral decree, candidates must receive more than 50 percent of the vote to win. This provision is particularly problematic as we approach the second round in which the high number of blank ballots could result in a number of races where neither candidate receives the magic 50 percent. The electoral decree needs to be modified before the second round, and the CEP needs to carefully communicate why the modification was

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needed. In Preval's case, where he received more votes than all the other candidates combined, the CEP's decision is defensible. However, Preval will have to reach out to his former rivals in order to govern this divided country. End Comment.

CARNEY